

For a veteran, a funeral service is the last official ceremony that that veteran will participate in; and for the family, that cemetery becomes a place of remembrance and love. It is so important to these families that they be able to visit their departed veteran in this environment.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, 9.3 million veterans are over 65. Sadly, 1,500 veterans pass away every day in the United States. The National Cemetery Expansion Act, provides more national cemeteries so that veterans' families can ensure their loved ones have a proper burial. I strongly support this legislation offered by Congressman GERLACH. In addition to providing more cemeteries, this Congress also needs to address the almost non-existent burial benefits provided by the VA.

Burial benefits have seriously eroded due to inflation; leaving states and families to make up the cost. Paying for rising burial expenses is a growing concern to families and veterans cemeteries. I have introduced a bill to increase burial benefits for veterans buried in state and national cemeteries. This bill would provide veterans families with the same percentage of burial costs as promised in 1973. I encourage this Congress to support my colleague's bill to increase the number of National Veterans Cemeteries, and to reestablish burial benefits for the families of our national heroes.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1516, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003.

I again want to express my appreciation to the Chairman of the full Committee, CHRIS SMITH, along with the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Benefits Subcommittee, HENRY BROWN and MICHAEL MICHAUD for their good work in crafting this legislation.

I am pleased that in H.R. 1516 we are authorizing the establishment of five new national cemeteries according to the VA's most current burial needs assessment report. We must provide a peaceful and dignified setting to honor the many men and women who bravely served this country in uniform.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have many other communities in great need of additional veterans' cemetery burial space. As we all know, the men and women of the "greatest generation" who served this country so grandly in World War II and Korea have reached their senior years. Well over 1,000 World War II veterans pass away each day, and this rate is projected to increase for years to come. Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to provide proper final resting places for our veterans. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration to meet this serious responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, this measure deserves the support of all Members and I urge my colleagues to vote for its passage.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in strong support of H.R. 1516, the National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003.

I would like to thank Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member EVANS for their leadership on the full Committee. I also want to recognize and thank HENRY BROWN, Chairman of the Benefits Subcommittee, for his good work and bipartisan efforts in working with me to craft this legislation and bring this measure to the House floor.

I am pleased that in H.R. 1516 we are authorizing the establishment of five new na-

tional cemeteries according to the VA's most current burial needs assessment report. Our veterans who served and protected us deserve nothing less than a proper final resting place.

Fortunately, the veterans in my district in Maine are not wanting for additional cemetery space thanks to a new state veterans' cemetery recently established in Caribou, ME. However, far too many communities are in need of a new veteran's cemetery. We must provide the resources to meet this need—It is our responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sound measure. I urge all Members to support its passage.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1516, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1516, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITFIELD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

#### RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF THE YEAR OF THE KOREAN WAR VETERAN

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 212) recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of the Year of the Korean War Veteran, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 212

Whereas 50 years ago, 1,800,000 Americans answered the call to defend freedom in South Korea and fought the common foe of communism with 21 allied countries under the banner of the United Nations;

Whereas the United States suffered 36,576 dead and 103,284 wounded during the Korean War in some of the most horrific conditions in the history of warfare;

Whereas the Nation's Korean War veterans did not receive the proper welcome home, thanks, or recognition for selfless service and sacrifice that had been given to veterans of previous wars;

Whereas the bravery and sacrifices of the Nation's Korean War veterans and their families and next of kin should be properly honored and recognized, and the American people wish to join in thanking and honoring Korean War veterans and their families;

Whereas it is important to include the history of the Korean War in the curricula of the Nation's schools so that future generations will learn about and appreciate the sacrifices of Korean War heroes;

Whereas the final year of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration should be recognized by a national effort of programs and activities to officially thank, honor, and welcome home the Nation's Korean War veterans and to officially thank and honor their families and next of kin; and

Whereas 2003 marks the final year of the United States 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration and the 50th year of the Armistice, and efforts are under way to designate 2003 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—*

(1) declares to the Nation and the world that the American people will never forget the Nation's Korean War veterans or those who served the Nation on the home front during the Korean War;

(2) recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of the Year of the Korean War Veteran;

(3) requests the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the Year of the Korean War Veteran with appropriate ceremonies and activities to thank, honor, and welcome home the Nation's Korean War veterans; and

(4) urges the chief executive officers of the States, and the chief executive officers of the political subdivisions of the States, to each issue a proclamation calling upon their citizens to "Pause to Remember" the Nation's Korean War veterans and their families and next of kin with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 212, a concurrent resolution introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

This resolution recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of the Year of the Korean War Veteran. This year marks the final year of the United States' 50th anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration and the 50th year of the armistice. While actual hostilities occurred from June 27, 1950, through July 7, 1953, Congress extended the war period from January 31, 1955, for veterans benefits eligibility because of the uneasy period following the end of hostilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some facts about the Korean War. Between the period of June 27, 1950, and January 31, 1955, the Korean War period, 6.8 million American men and women served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Between June 28 of